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First-Round Leaderboard

| Pos. | Name | Scores |
|------|-------------------|------------|
| 1 | Xinjun Zhang | 61 (-9) PC |
| 2 | Mark Anderson | 62 (-8) PC |
| T3 | Ricardo Celia | 63 (-7) PC |
| T3 | Scottie Scheffler | 63 (-7) PC |
| T5 | Six players tied | 64 (-6) PC |

*FC – Fundadores Course, PC – Pacos y Fabios Course

China's Xinjun Zhang posts 9-under 61 for opening-round lead at Country Club de Bogotá Championship

BOGOTÁ, Colombia – The Web.com Tour's Country Club de Bogotá Championship began on Thursday morning on both the Fundadores and Pacos courses at host Country Club de Bogotá. Playing on the Pacos Course, China's Xinjun Zhang posted an eagle, eight birdies and one bogey for a 9-under 61, good for a one-shot lead heading into Friday's second round of play at the 10th annual event.

Zhang opened his round in benign fashion with back-to-back pars on Nos. 1 and 2 before five birdies over his next eight holes pushed him to 5-under for the day. A bogey on the par-3 11th slowed his momentum, but the 31-year-old rallied quickly thereafter with a bounce-back eagle on the par-5 12th.

Birdies on 14, 15 and 17 rounded out a career-best round for Zhang, as his 61 marked his lowest to date in a PGA TOUR or Web.com Tour event.

"I caught a little bit of luck out there today. I had a few errant shots on some holes and the eagle putt on 12 had some speed to it but hit the flagstick in the center and went in," said Zhang after his round. "I also had a chip on 14 that if it didn't hit the flag it might have been off the green. The last few events my swing hasn't really been where it's been in the past and my coach has been helping me out the past few days and has helped me find my rhythm."

Zhang played the Web.com Tour in 2017, notching runner-up finishes at the Chitimacha Louisiana Open presented by MISTRAS and BMW Charity Pro-Am presented by SYNEX Corporation to secure his 2017-18 PGA TOUR card with a 20th-place finish on the Regular Season money list.

During his rookie year on TOUR, Zhang recorded three top-25 finishes, including a season-best T5 at the Corales Puntacana Resort & Club Championship. Finishing at No. 167 in the FedExCup, he lost his card for the 2019 season and was forced back to Q-School, where a T3 finish delivered much-needed status for the 2019 season.

"I learned a lot of things playing on the PGA TOUR the last year. I've learned a lot about the mental side of the game and taking it easy out here. I've learned to accept the outcomes of my shots no matter what they are," said Zhang, who has made one cut in two starts this year. "Playing on the PGA TOUR has helped most with my mental game, I don't want to get too high or too low out here. Also, the confidence I have knowing I did make it to the PGA TOUR and my game is at a level where I can play out there has helped a lot."



When Zhang earned his PGA TOUR card in 2017, he was joined by fellow countryman Marty Dou, as the duo became the first Chinese-born players in history to earn TOUR cards.

Like Zhang, Dou also lost his status after one year and returned to the Web.com Tour in January to try and play his way back, winning the season-opening Bahamas Great Exuma Classic at Sandals Emerald Bay to get a quick start on his goal for the year. Zhang, as it turned out, took notice.

“Marty winning definitely pushes me out here, especially seeing him play under such pressure in the Bahamas when he didn’t know how many starts he was going to have,” he said. “There are four Chinese players on the Web.com Tour right now and I hope everyone can play well enough to get to the PGA TOUR.”

Former University of South Carolina golfer and PGA TOUR member Mark Anderson is one back of Zhang after posting an 8-under 62 on the Pacos Course. Starting on the back nine, the 32-year-old birdied four of his opening five holes before closing with birdies on Nos. 3, 5, 6 and 9 for his career-low round on the Web.com Tour.

“I drove it really well, which you have to do around Pacos, and made a lot of putts,” said Anderson. “I kept myself out of trouble for the most part, hit a lot of greens and managed it pretty well today. I put myself in position to attack the pins, because if you put yourself in bad position off the tee, you can’t get at those pins.”

Anderson is making his 138th career Web.com Tour start this week, earning a victory at the 2013 BMW Charity Pro-Am presented by SYNEX Corporation and 14 total top-10 finishes. The Beaufort, South Carolina, native has 65 career starts on the PGA TOUR, but just two top-10 finishes – a T9 at the 2012 Children’s Miracle Network Classic and a T10 at the 2017 Puerto Rico Open.

In his lone start thus far in 2018, Anderson finished T25 at The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic at The Abaco Club last week.

Colombia’s Ricardo Celia and former University of Texas star Scottie Scheffler are tied for third with matching rounds of 7-under 63, while fellow Colombian and 2016 champion Sebastián Muñoz is one of six players tied for fourth with rounds of 6-under 64 – all on the Pacos Course.

Celia, who hails from Barranquilla, was tied for the lead alongside Anderson at 8-under heading to the par-4 18th but finished with a bogey to wind up with 63. The 26-year-old is making his 12th career Web.com Tour start this week, with nine of those starts coming in 2016 when he had conditional status on Tour. Celia has played primarily on PGA TOUR Latinoamerica each of the last five years, notching seven top-10 finishes and a victory at the 2015 Ecuador Open.

The day’s low round on the Fundadores Course, which serves as the tournament’s main venue, was 5-under 66, posted by Brian Richey and Byron Meth.

THURSDAY NOTES:

- * Thursday’s weather: Sunny, High of 70, Winds 5-10 mph.
- * This week’s purse is \$700,000, with \$126,000 going to the champion.
- * Thursday marked the first time both courses at the Country Club de Bogotá were played in competition. Players will again play both courses tomorrow with third and fourth rounds being played on the Fundadores Course.
- * In his lone start in Bogotá, Zhang posted rounds of 76-79—155 (13-over) to miss the cut by 12 shots.



* The 62 marks a career-low for Anderson on the Web.com Tour in his 440th career round. His career-low round to par came during the first round of the 2013 BMW Charity Pro-Am presented by SYNEX Corporation (9-under 63), where he won his first and only Web.com Tour title.

* Anderson is making his seventh career start in Bogotá, where he owns just one top-25 finish – a T17 effort in 2016.

* Scheffler was one of the more highly-touted players in the United States as both a junior and college standout at Texas. The Dallas native won the 2013 U.S. Junior Amateur, was named Phil Mickelson Freshman of the Year in 2015 and was a member of the victorious U.S. Walker Cup team in 2017. He qualified for the U.S. Open in 2016 and 2017, finishing as low amateur at the latter with a T27 effort.

* There are currently two Colombian players inside the top five. Since the tournament’s inception in 2010, Colombian-born players have finished inside the top 10 four times: David Vanegas (2011, T3), Manny Villegas (2013, T7), Sebastian Pinzon (2014, T8) and Sebastián Muñoz (2016, Won).

* In the nine-year history of the Country Club de Bogotá Championship, the first-round leader/co-leader has never gone on to win the tournament. In 2018, eventual champion Ben Taylor was tied for fifth through 18 holes, one back of a quartet of leaders after posting a 4-under 67.

* In 2015, Roberto Diaz (62) held a tournament-record three-shot lead through 18 holes of play in Bogotá. Miguel Angel Carballo held a two-shot lead through 18 holes in 2016, while Xinjun Zhang (2019), Brice Garnett (2017), Justin Thomas (2014), Danny Lee (2013), and Andrew Parr (2011) each held one-shot leads. All other years, there was a tie through one round of play. Since 2012, first-round leaders/co-leaders in Bogotá have gone on to win 16 PGA TOUR victories and two FedExCup titles.

* Through 18 holes of play, nine former Mackenzie Tour – PGA TOUR Canada players are inside the top 25, led by Chris Baker and Taylor Moore, who are each tied for fourth at 6-under par.

* Between the Fundadores and Pacos courses on Thursday, there were seven eagles recorded on par-4 holes, with five of those coming on the latter.

*Country Club de Bogotá Scoring Averages:

| | Front | Back | Total | Cumulative |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| R1 (Fundadores) | 35.934 | 36.539 | 72.474 | |
| R1 (Pacos y Fabios) | 34.692 | 34.064 | 68.756 | |

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